

6,000 tons. And that's good news for farmers.

By working together to deepen the Columbia River Channel, we're helping to save manufacturers and growers an estimated \$68 million a year on the cost of shipping containerized cargo. That helps a lot when you're competing in a global market, especially if you're an individual rancher, small-business owner, owner of your own farm.

The steps I'm announcing today also fulfill our responsibility to be good stewards of the land and water. The environmental review of this project included active participation by interested parties and the public. Through the collaborative process, they come up with the solution. It included a thorough analysis by environmental agencies, and they ruled the dredging safe for the river's ecosystem.

The Army Corps of Engineers will carry out their work under strict environmental guidelines and monitoring. In fact, this project includes restoration and conservation measures that go beyond the requirements of the law. We're installing new technology in the lower Columbia River to help salmon and steelhead pass through the tide gates. We'll restore and protect wildlife habitats in tidal marshes, swamps, and other wetlands. We're seeking out good uses for the sand dredged from the bottom of the river. All of these efforts will help us meet a great goal, to leave the Columbia River ecosystem in better shape than we found it. I'm confident we can achieve that goal.

The Columbia River Channel Deepening Project is a wise use of taxpayers' money. It fosters an ethic of cooperation between Washington, DC, and State and local governments. It brings together business leaders and labor representatives, farmers, ranchers, and conservationists and politicians on both sides of the aisle. The project fulfills the Government's charge to create the conditions for economic expansion and job growth by respecting our duties to the environment.

I'm proud that we're able to move forward with this project after years of review. I urge the United States Congress to act quickly on my budget request.

On many other issues, from reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire to keeping hydropower energy rates as low as possible to conserving our precious salmon, my administration is working with Pacific Northwest leaders to meet our shared priorities. I look forward to working with you in the future to sustain the physical and economic vitality of this beautiful part of America.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. at Rivergate Industrial Park. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Corey, commissioner, Port of Portland; Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives Karen Minnis; and Bob Lohn, Regional Administrator, Northwest Regional Office, National Marine Fisheries Service.

Remarks in a Discussion at Southridge High School in Beaverton, Oregon August 13, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for being here. Go ahead and be seated, please. Thanks for coming. Laura and I are here—we're here

in your State asking for the vote. That's why we're here in the great State of Oregon. Today I've got a unique way to explain why I'm running for office again and

what I intend to do, and that's to talk to some of our fellow citizens about job creation, job growth, the entrepreneurial spirit. It's one way to help make the point to the people of Oregon that there's more work to be done. Then I'd like to answer some of the questions you have.

But before I do so, I want to tell you how proud I am of Laura. You're going to hear reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is to have Laura as the First Lady for 4 years.

These campaigns, when you campaign for President, it's a long ordeal, and that's the way it should be, really. You should have to go out and ask for the vote and let people know your heart and your vision. It also means you get to spend some quality time with your family. *[Laughter]* So it's great to be traveling with Laura. And one of the really—joys for our family is that Barbara and Jenna are now campaigning with us. It's like going on the camping trip I never took them on, you know.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I like to tell everybody—I admit it—he's not the prettiest face in the race. *[Laughter]* However, that's not why I picked him. I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because he can do the job and his judgment.

I appreciate your friend and mine, your Senator, the great Gordon Smith, for traveling with us today. He's a joy to work with. He's a decent, gentle soul who cares deeply about the people of Oregon. He understands this State well. He's a great patriot. I'm proud to call him friend. I want to thank you for being here, Gordon. We just have come from announcing a project to deepen the Columbia River so that the port of Portland and Vancouver, Washington, can remain vibrant hubs of commerce. I like to remind people, in the Nation's Capital, a lot of them can talk a good game. I like to be the person known as somebody getting the job done, and this project we announced today is getting the

job done. And I'm proud you're here, Sharon. Thanks for coming. It's great to see you again.

And old Greg Walden showed up. Thanks for coming, Greg. He's a good man, fun to work with. We worked on a lot of important projects for Oregon, including the Healthy Forest Initiative. You might remember, they've been talking about doing something about these catastrophic wildfires. We actually got the job done through the Healthy Forest Initiative.

It wasn't easy to get done, because some of the big talkers in Washington blocked it. One in particular finally came out west and he said, well, even though he had blocked it in the past, some of the parts looked like they're all right now, you know. It's kind of like those wildfires. He shifts in the wind. *[Laughter]*

As well, we've got a man running for the United States Senate from the State of Washington. I strongly support his candidacy, George Nethercutt. Thank you for coming, George.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. Again, I appreciate the small-business owners who are on stage and with us today. We're going to talk a lot about small business creation.

It's good to see my buddy Molly. Thanks for coming, Molly. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Not only am I asking for the vote, I'm asking for your help. You see, we have a duty—we have a duty in this country to vote. And one of the things I'm asking our supporters is to register people to vote, encourage our fellow citizens to do their duty.

You know, it wasn't all that long ago—I'm going to talk about Afghanistan a little later on—but one of the interesting statistics that came to my desk was the fact that over 8 million people in liberated Afghanistan have registered to vote. This, in spite of the fact—it's an amazing statistic when you think about the fact that it wasn't all that long ago that a bus was stopped—the thugs from the Taliban pulled over four

women registrars of voters and killed them. And yet, the people, because they long for freedom, said, "You're not going to intimidate us. We want to participate in a free society." They're registering to vote, and we herald that.

We ought to be—we ought to have that same spirit in our own country. And so, therefore, I ask you to register people to vote, and when you get them headed into the polls, or in your case, by ballot, head them our way, because we've got a plan to keep the country safer, stronger, and better.

Thank you all for coming. There's all kinds of ways to make America better. I'll talk about two, right quick. We're at a school. One way to make America better is to make sure every child learns to read and write and add and subtract. You might remember, when we went to Washington, when my administration went to Washington, there was this practice around the country in certain school districts where they would move children from grade to grade, year after year, and the children didn't learn the basics. So we changed that attitude. I went to Washington for a reason, and that is to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know what that means. It means, in certain places, the standards were so low that what they got were lousy results. And that's not good enough for this great country.

So I worked with Members of the Congress to pass new law that says: We'll increase funding for public schools; we'll increase funding for elementary and secondary schools by some 49 percent since I got there; we'll increase funding for Title I students by over 50 percent since I got there. But we also recognized that the issue is more than funding. The issue is results, and so we raised the standards. We said, "We expect accountability in our schools, to tell us whether or not children are learning to read and write and add and subtract."

We believe in local control of schools. When we find children in schools that won't change and won't teach, we demand something other than the status quo, and we're seeing great results. The achievement gap among students in America is beginning to close because we believe every child can learn.

I'm running because there's more to do to make sure we continue to raise the bar, to continue to insist on curricula that works. See, that's why you measure, because you want to know. You can't solve a problem unless you're willing to diagnose the problem in the first place. So we say to schools, "Show us early whether or not a child can read and write. And if not, there's extra help."

So that no child gets left behind, we've got to make sure our Head Start programs start children off early with the fundamentals of reading. We want to make sure our high school diplomas mean something. We need intervention programs for children who cannot read in junior high. We've got to be emphasizing math and science. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, the children of this country are going to be more hopeful, more confident, and have more of the skills necessary to succeed. And America will be better off for it.

Let me tell you what else we'll be better off to do. We'll be better off as we continue to rally the armies of compassion. You'll hear me talk about our military later on and our economy, but the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's the true strength of America. If you really think about it, you don't find it in the halls of Government; you find it in the hearts of people. And the President must understand that. And one of my most important jobs is to rally the armies of compassion, to call upon people to love their neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself.

And so, today Chris Dudley has joined us. You might remember him because of his exploits on the basketball court. A lot

of kids are going to remember him because of the basketball camp he set up. It's the kind of compassion I'm talking about. We couldn't pass a law to say to old Dudley, give back to the community where you're living. He had to feel that in his heart. He had to say, "This is a call that I hear." Laws don't do this—from Government. People hear a higher calling. And those of us in positions of responsibility must not only thank people like Chris but say that we're willing to open up Government funding to grants to organizations that exist because of their faith—all faith—so that we can help save our society.

I appreciate you coming. Chris is one of the tallest soldiers in the army of compassion. [Laughter] Proud you're here. I want to thank you and Christine for coming. It's great to see you again.

A stronger America is one in which people can find work and our economy is vibrant. Listen, we've been through a lot together when you think about it. Over the past 3½ years, we have been through an awful lot. We've been through a recession. That means things are going backwards. [Laughter] We've been through a corporate scandal. By the way, we passed tough laws. It ought to be abundantly clear to CEOs in corporate America that we expect there to be honesty in the boardrooms of our country. We got attacked, and all of this affected our economy, affected our psychology as well.

But we've overcome these obstacles. We've overcome them because we've got a great workforce. We've overcome them because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, and we're going to talk to some entrepreneurs here in a minute. We've overcome it because we got great farmers and ranchers in this country. You know, we've overcome a lot because the soul of this country is strong. I think—I will argue strongly that we overcame these economic problems as well because of well-timed tax cuts.

Nationally, the economy is strong. It's getting strong. We've added about 1.5 mil-

lion jobs. Nationwide, the unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. Here in the State of Oregon, you've been struggling. After all, your resource industry got hit hard. High-tech got hit hard. The recession hurt. Your unemployment rate, however, has gone from 8.7 percent to 6.8 percent. It's getting better, but there's more work to do. There's more work to do. And I want to share with you some of the things that I think we ought to be doing to make sure this economy continues to grow so people can find a job and to make sure jobs stay here in America.

First, we've got to make sure we got reasonable energy policy. We've got to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I've come to your State several times, and I said one thing we must not do is to destroy the hydroelectric power of the State of Oregon and the State of Washington in order to have a reasonable energy policy. Turns out we're capable of preserving the dams and protecting the fish, and we're showing people we're able to do so.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to have health care, reasonable health care policies that make health care available and affordable. I'm going to talk to these small-business owners, and you're going to hear from—maybe not from these, but I can assure you you'll hear from other small-business owners that they're having trouble meeting the health care demands. Health care costs are going up. I think one way to handle that is to allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so that they can afford insurance at the same rates as big companies are able to do.

We will continue to expand community health centers; those are places where low-income Americans can get primary care. We'd rather help people who need help in clinics rather than emergency rooms of hospitals, in order to help the cost of health care.

We've changed Medicare. You remember all the talk about Medicare. Campaign after campaign after campaign, they'd come and tell you, "We'll strengthen Medicare." We got the job done in Medicare. Seniors can now sign up for drug discount cards. If you're a senior and eligible, I urge you to do so. You'll save money.

In '05, for the first time, Medicare is going to provide preventative screenings. It makes sense, doesn't it? If we're spending your money, we ought to be able to look at a problem early and solve it before it becomes acute. And in '06, seniors will have choices in the Medicare policy, including prescription drugs. It makes no sense, folks, to have a system that pays \$100,000 for heart surgery and not one dime of pharmaceuticals to prevent the heart disease from occurring in the first place.

We'll use technology to help modernize health care. I mean, health care is like in the old ages. I mean, when you think about it, you carry your file from room to room, and it's handwritten, and most doctors can't write. [Laughter] We need to modernize the system to reduce costs and to reduce medical errors, and we will continue to do so.

I'll tell you what else we need in this country. To make sure these good folks can afford health care for their people, to make sure you can afford health care, we need medical liability reform. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I stand with the docs, the patients, the small-business owners. We need medical liability reform now.

Finally, in order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about trade policy. There's economic isolationists in our country that would like to wall us off from the rest of the world. That would be wrong. Presidents before me have decided to open up our markets for goods from overseas. You know why? If you're a consumer and

you have more goods to choose from, you're likely to get a better quality good at a better price. That's the way the market works. And what we ought to be doing in trade is saying, "We treat you this way; you treat us equally as well. Open up your markets to U.S. products."

I've told the people of this State, if I got to be the President, I would work hard to open up markets for Oregon farm products, and we delivered. The agricultural sector of America is strong because people are eating Oregon wheat—that's why. And they're eating it from all over the world. Good trade policy will keep jobs here. We've got to be confident about our ability to compete. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the playing field is level.

What I'm telling you is, I've got a reason for running, to keep the country stronger. I've got an idea—I've got ideas to make sure that people can find work. I've got ideas to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. The role of Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, in which people feel confident about starting their own business and growing their small business to a larger business. And we've got some people on stage who represent the entrepreneurial spirit of America.

Our first guest is George Puentes. George is a—from Salem, Oregon. He is an entrepreneur. What do you make, George?

George Puentes. We make tortillas. Good ones. [Laughter]

The President. *Me gusto mucho.*

Mr. Puentes. *Esta bien.*

The President. So, like, when did you start?

[At this point, Mr. Puentes made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you. Let me talk about that. Thank you, George. Let me

explain that. Let me explain what he means. Part of the tax relief, when you hear us talking about tax relief, part of the tax relief was to allow small businesses to accelerate depreciation on investment, which really means that there is tax relief when they decide to spend extra money. That's what we're talking about, right? In other words, we're saying to the small-business sector, "We want you to invest."

What did you invest in?

Mr. Puentes. What did we invest in?

The President. Tortilla-making machines?

Mr. Puentes. Tortilla-making machines. [Laughter]

The President. Yes. So the Tax Code said to George, "We would like you to make decisions, investment decisions, more investment." That's what the tax relief said. He said "Okay, it made sense." He took a look, and his business was strong enough that he could make an investment.

The interesting thing about investment, and you must understand this, is that when somebody says, "I'm investing," what they're really saying is, "I'm buying"—in his case, a machine. And guess what? Somebody has to make the machine. So there's a worker who's benefiting from his decision. He says, "I want to purchase something extra. The tax relief has encouraged me to purchase something extra," and so somebody has got to make it. But not only does it help the worker making the machine, it helps the workers in George's factory that he's buying better machines. When he buys and upgrades his equipment, a tortilla worker for George is more likely to find his work—keep his work. In other words, they become more productive. Is that an accurate assessment?

Mr. Puentes. That is extremely accurate.

The President. Whew. [Laughter] Thank you.

Mr. Puentes. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Just out of curiosity, did you hire anybody this year, or are you going to?

Mr. Puentes. We've hired over 30 employees this year already—

The President. Yes, there you go. See, that's what's happening in the country: Small business after small business after small business, they're hiring people. They're adding 34 employees here, 34 there, and it's adding up. And you know what's interesting? Most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And a lot of this tax relief that was opposed by some in Washington, DC, was aimed at our small-business sector.

We had a problem. The problem was the recession caused people to lose work. So I decided, why don't we put policy in place that will encourage the job creators to expand. That's what the tax relief was all about, when you think about it. In other words, what people don't know is that most small businesses pay individual income taxes. George's company doesn't. He's what I call a C corp. But our next speaker's company does. She is—her company is called an S corp or a sole proprietorship—not in her case—but sole proprietorships as well pay individual income taxes. So when you reduce individual income taxes for S corps and sole proprietorships, you're really saying, "We're going to stimulate the small-business sector of America." And it's paying off. I'm telling you, it's paying off.

Ready to go? Jana, you ready to talk? She is an S corp. What do you do?

Jana Taylor. We manufacture cookies and cookie dough.

The President. Yes. That's why I ride my mountain bike, so I can eat your cookie and cookie dough.

Ms. Taylor. And we buy Oregon wheat.

The President. Yes, that's good. See, so she's what they call an S corp. She's a person that, when they pay tax in their business, they pay at the individual income-tax rate. So I said when we cut taxes, everybody who pays taxes ought to get relief. We ought not to play favorites with the tax relief plan.

And you received relief. Did it help? I'm not a lawyer, but it sounds like I am. I'm leading the witness. [Laughter]

Ms. Taylor. No, it definitely helped. And when you get to go to work every day because it's your own passion and what you do and love best, you get to put back into the company which, again, fosters more employment, more efficiencies, better productivity, capacity, and technology. We basically put that money back into advancing the company forward.

The President. Yes. You know something about Jana? She started her company in her own kitchen. See, that is—what a fantastic story, isn't it? That's a great story of America, when you think about it. You start—you say, "I want my own business. I want to own my own business." Jana says, "I think I've got what it takes to own my own business." We need to promote ownership in America. We want more people owning things in this country. If you own your own business—you heard her, I didn't write what she said. She said, "I wake up every day enthused about what I'm doing."

Anyway, are people eating cookie dough these days?

Ms. Taylor. And a lot of it.

The President. They are? Good.

So give us employees and all that, how many you've got?

[*Ms. Taylor made brief remarks.*]

The President. One of the things Jana and I talked about before was it's very important for Government to help people with something they don't have enough time of, and that is time. They just don't have enough of it, time. And we were talking about flex-time and comp-time rules. It turns out the Federal Government, in case you don't know this, needs to pass a law that will allow many businesses—enable their workers to have flex-time rules, which means you can figure out—gear your own schedule to meet your own needs, or comp-time rules, which will allow you to take some overtime for your own personal

use. You can change overtime pay for extra time to be with your family or to be with a loved one or to go back to school, whatever you may think you want to do. And Jana and I were talking about it. You've done some of that in your own company?

Ms. Taylor. Within the boundaries of the legal and opportunity—

The President. Of course within the boundaries of law. [Laughter] We're not dining you out here. [Laughter]

[*Ms. Taylor made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, it's called flex-time. Congress—we'll work with Congress. One reason I'm running again is to put rules in place to not only help the entrepreneur but, more importantly, help the workers be able to balance their own time so they can do—[applause].

Thanks, Jana. Good luck. I'm really proud of your story.

See, when you hear people say, "I started my company at the kitchen table," that spirit must exist in this country for a long time coming. It's called the entrepreneurial spirit. That's what that means.

We're with Kathy LaCompte. Kathy is a tree grower. Yes, there's a lot of trees. So what kind of trees?

Kathy LaCompte. We grow trees from seed, and we support the Christmas tree farms, the timber industry, and the wholesale nursery industry here in Oregon.

The President. Very good. You're the seedling provider.

Ms. LaCompte. I'm the seedling provider. You're the seedling grower. We could work together.

The President. See, I told her we have a tree farm on our ranch in Crawford. [Laughter] It turns out the trees—seedlings she raises won't survive where we live. [Laughter] Let me ask you—employees—give us a sense for your business.

Ms. LaCompte. We have 17 employees year-round. And we bump up to around 65 employees during our harvest season, which is the first quarter of every year.

The President. Right, and how so—how is your outlook? Upbeat, not so upbeat?

Ms. LaCompte. We've had a good outlook. Your Healthy Forests Restoration Initiative was a good help for us.

The President. Yes, good.

Ms. LaCompte. When we can manage those forests wisely, they can be replanted. Oregon has very strict replanting laws, and so we can provide the seedlings for that replanting. That helps our nursery.

The President. That's good, yes. It turns out trees are a renewable resource that can and must be looked after. It's interesting, if you just let them sit there and rot, they turn into kindling. [Laughter] And some of the most dramatic memories of my Presidency were flying over the fires in Oregon last summer. I mean, it was—it's unbelievable. It was—it's an imagery that a lot of people out East need to see before they make policy, so they understand the consequences of bad policy. [Applause] All right.

Kathy and I were also talking about health care. She—there's an interesting new product available for our citizens, and they're called health savings accounts. Basically what it means is, is that you buy a catastrophic plan with a high deductible and that you then contribute tax-free from zero to the limits of your deductible, and you can earn that money tax-free. It's your money. If you don't spend that money in the year in which you contribute it, you roll it over tax-free. So you, in essence, have a savings account for health. And yet if things get rough, there's a catastrophic plan to take care of your health care. That's what we want.

And these plans really do a couple of things. One, they make sure that the patient and the doctor are central to the health care decisionmaking process in the country. But they're also an innovative way to hold down costs. And the other thing is, is that since it's your money, you see how much money you have in your health account; you're probably going to make

wiser decisions with your body. In other words, it's part of making sure that you make good choices so that you end up saving money from that which you contributed.

Interestingly enough, Kathy has one of these accounts. Has it worked?

Ms. LaCompte. It has worked. We had a MSA, a medical savings account, when they were first introduced probably 12 or 15 years ago, and it's worked really well for us. And so we were really anxious to have one of those available for employees. So we've been investigating that, and I think we'll go ahead and invest in that for our employees.

The President. Yes, you ought to look at it. I urge small-business owners to look at health savings accounts. It's a way to hold down costs. You can contribute, along with your employee—it depends upon your choice. You can contribute into the account itself, but the employee—this is a portable account, obviously. The person owns the account. We have a different—we have a changing world, when you think about it. People are going from job to job, and it makes sense for them to be able to carry a health care policy with them from job to job—part of an ownership society.

You investing in anything this year?

Ms. LaCompte. We did invest this year. We were able to build a new packing facility and office complex. And it's just lovely, and we're really happy.

The President. She showed me a picture of it. It is spectacular.

Ms. LaCompte. It is. It's wonderful.

The President. Did you build it yourself? Or did you actually hire somebody?

Ms. LaCompte. We had some people help—

The President. That's how the economy works. She has a—the picture I hope we're beginning to paint is, is that there are millions of decisions that take place throughout our economy because the Tax Code has encouraged these decisions, which, in turn, stimulates growth. Somebody had to come

and build the place. You just heard her. She didn't do it herself. She actually paid somebody. Somebody had to buy the nails. In other words, that's how the economy works. Government's role is to provide economic stimulus to encourage people's decisionmaking, which then leads to jobs, and that's precisely what we've done.

And in this campaign, I urge people to be careful about falling prey to the rhetoric, "I am going to spend this money and pay for it by taxing the rich." That's what you're hearing again, isn't it? That's political rhetoric. So, I'm running against a fellow, he's made about \$2.2 trillion of new promises. [Laughter] And we've still got September and October to go. [Laughter] And so they said to him, "So how are you going to pay for it?" they said. They said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, we're going to tax the rich." Remember, when you tax the rich, you're taxing S corps and sole proprietorships. When you start running up those tax rates on individuals, the people who start paying are the small-business owners. I told you, by far, the vast majority of small businesses in America are sole proprietorships or S corps. And if they are halfway successful, he's running the taxes up on them. And why would you want to be taxing the job creators of America? It's bad economic policy to run up the taxes.

I'll give you one other thought. Let me just leave you with one other thought about taxing the rich. You know how that works. A lot of the rich are able to get accountants, so they don't—they're able to dodge. You've seen it before. We're going to tax the rich, and then they figure out how not to get taxed. And so guess who ends up paying? You do. And we're not going to let him do it to us. We're not going to let him wreck that economy by running up our taxes.

Okay, hold on. We've got more work to do here. We've got more work to do. Right, Vail?

Vail Horton. Yes, sir.

The President. Vail Horton. I want you to hear this story. This is a fabulous story of an entrepreneur. Tell us your story, Vail.

[Mr. Horton made brief remarks.]

The President. One thing you do have is a heart and a soul and the desire to improve yourself. And I hope your business does well.

Listen, what a fantastic country, isn't it, where somebody has got a dream and says, "I'm going to overcome obstacles and work to realize my dream." He's expanding. He's growing. The tax relief has helped on the investment side. I'll tell you why: Because people can take a tax deduction on the investment they make when they buy a piece of his equipment. In other words, it's stimulated demand for his products. And this guy is going to make it. There's no doubt in my mind. Thanks for coming.

Listen, I appreciate you all coming. I want to talk about one other thing right quick, and that is—it's important to talk about our economy, but one way to make sure we continue to grow is to keep us safe. That's my most solemn duty, is to work to keep the country safe. First of all, you've got to know, nobody wants to be a war President. It's—I just can't imagine anybody saying, "Gosh, I wish war would happen on my watch." It's tough on the country to be at war, and this is a war that came to us not because of our asking, by the way. It came because of an enemy which cannot stand what we stand for, and that's freedom—freedom to worship the way you want, freedom to realize your dreams.

I want to share some lessons that are critical to our security and to peace. First, the nature of this enemy is—it's hard for us to understand in America. These are coldblooded killers. You cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot reason. You cannot hope for the best. We must bring them to justice before they hurt us again. [Applause] Thank you. You can't show

weakness to these people. You cannot show weakness. That's the nature of these folks.

Second lesson is, is that this is a different kind of war. This is the kind of war where these people will hide in dark corners of the world or find a cave and plot and plan. They're patient. They'll wait until they find a moment, and they'll strike. And therefore, in order to secure our country, we must not only bring them to justice; we must say to those who provide them safe harbor, "You're equally as guilty as the terrorists who have conducted the raids." And when you say something, you better mean it, in order to make the world a more peaceful place.

So I said to the Taliban, "You're harboring these folks. Give it up." And they defied us, and we took action. We gave them a chance. The use of our military is the last option for a President—the last option. And they had their choice, and they refused to listen to America and our allies and friends, and we removed them from power. And as a result, Afghanistan is no longer a training base for Al Qaida. Remember, they had trained thousands of people there. They're an ally in the war on terror. It's hard to envision that after 4 short years, they're now heading to Presidential elections. That's an amazing thought, isn't it? The world is better off. America is safer because of the actions we took in Afghanistan. And equally as important, the people in that country are better off.

I was in Cleveland, Ohio, the other evening for the International Children's Games. And I was welcoming children from all around the world, and right in my vision—I'm talking front row—was the Afghan girls soccer team. And I can assure you their life has improved so dramatically from the days in which their mothers would be summarily whipped in public because they held a belief in stark contrast to the dim vision of those barbarians who were running Afghanistan.

The third lesson is that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it fully materializes. That's a lesson of September the 11th. And that is a vital lesson of September the 11th, and that is a lesson this country must never forget. See, you cannot hope for the best with these people. If we see a threat, we must deal with it, always first through diplomacy. And that helps explain some of the rationale for the decision I made on Saddam Hussein.

See, we saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. Now, remember his history. He had used weapons of mass destruction. That meant he was a threat, because one of the most dangerous parts of this new war is that there is an enemy who will chop somebody's head off, just like that, who would love to get ahold of weapons of mass destruction to inflict even greater damage than the deeds they did on September the 11th. That's the nature of these people.

And so we saw a threat. He was the guy who had used them. He was a sworn enemy of America. He had actually paid families of suicide bombers. That's the ultimate terrorist act, isn't it, to go kill innocent people as a suicider, and he was willing to subsidize their families. He had terrorist organizations inside his country. Make no mistake about it. A guy named Abu Nidal, a fierce terrorist who killed a guy named Leon Klinghoffer because he happened to be Jewish—his organization did—they were in and out of Baghdad. Zarqawi—he's the person who has ordered the beheading of innocent people in order to shake our will—he was in and out of Baghdad. These are terrorist organizations. So we saw a threat.

But I recognized that it was important to bring the country together as best as possible on this issue. So I went to the United States Congress, and I said, "Look, we see a threat, and we see the lessons of September the 11th. What do you think?" And so the Congress looked at the intelligence, and they remembered the facts. Members of both political parties

looked at the intelligence. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence and came to the same conclusion I had come to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

I also knew we ought to work the diplomatic front, so I went to the United Nations. And I stood in front of the United Nations and said, "Listen, we think Saddam Hussein is a threat, and you've said he had been a threat year after year, resolution after resolution. And the world has changed after September the 11th, so why don't we collectively deal with him?" And they passed a resolution, on a 15-to-nothing basis, that said Saddam's a threat; he must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. That's exactly what the resolution said.

And so we had a diplomatic front, sent the message to Saddam Hussein. He defied the world. He said—I can't put words in the fellow's mouth, but it seemed like he said, "Who cares what you say?" And we said, "Well, let's—why don't we send inspectors. Let's go send inspectors in to find out the truth." And he systematically deceived the inspectors.

So I'm left with a choice. We've tried diplomacy. We've tried inspections. This guy doesn't really care what the free world has told him. Do I trust a madman? Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th? Or do I take action necessary to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America.

Knowing what I know today—see, I thought we were going to find stockpiles. So did everybody else, you know. They might be. We haven't found them yet, I recognize that. But we do know he had the capability of making weapons. And after September the 11th, how could we take a risk that he wouldn't pass that capability on to an enemy. I do know that the minute the world, once again, had passed a resolution and nothing happened, he would be emboldened and strengthened with that capability. Knowing what I know today, I would make the same decision. [Applause]

Thank you all. And the world is better off because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell. We're a safer country.

You know, it's an interesting—we've had an interesting dialog in this campaign thus far. My opponent voted for the resolution. Then the Democrat primary came about, and he declared himself the antiwar candidate. [Laughter] And then he finally said, "Knowing what we know today, I would have continued to vote for the Iraq resolution." So he's been there, not been there, been there. We've got 80 days left. There's no telling what his position will be. [Laughter] But I think it's important that everybody understand clearly where people stand when you're running for President of the United States.

A couple of other points. I want to thank our troops. It's—we've got a great military. [Applause] Thank you all. And thank our veterans who are here too.

Okay. Got a little more to go here. [Laughter] I'm just getting wound up. So anytime we put our troops into harm's way, they deserve the full support of our Government. During—I just want to remind everybody about the facts. I submitted a supplemental funding request to the Congress in September of last year to make sure our troops had body armor and spare parts, fuel, ammunition, the things necessary to be able to do their mission. It passed the Congress—overwhelmingly passed the Congress. Members of both political parties supported the request. In the United States Senate, as Gordon might recall, only 12 Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate—voted against funding for our troops in combat.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So when asked, his explanation was, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, right before I voted against it." [Laughter] End quote. He went on to say, "Well"—when pressed, he said, well, he's proud of the vote, and then said, well, it was a complicated matter. [Laughter]

There's nothing complicated about giving our troops that which they need to do their mission.

A couple of other points—let me make a couple of other points, and I'll answer some questions. There's a lot of talk about coalitions, and we need to work with our friends and allies in this different kind of war because you've got to share intelligence, and you've got to work with your friends and allies to cut off money and deny people sanctuary and access. And it requires close collaboration, and that's what we're doing. That's what we're doing. I talk to Tony Blair all the time. He and I are from, I would say, different parts of the political spectrum, but we share a same understanding of the world in which we live, that we've got to be firm and diligent in running down these enemies, and we've got to deny them safe harbor, and we've got to spread freedom.

And I think it's wrong to denigrate the contributions of our allies in Iraq by saying that there is no coalition, we're going it alone. There's over 30—about 30 nations involved. These strong leaders, from Italy to Japan to South Korea—all around the world—have joined with the United States. We ought not to be denigrating their contribution. We ought to be thanking the moms and dads of those countries whose sons and daughters are in harm way.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay, hold on. We're running out of time here. I've still got more to say—[laughter]—much to Laura's chagrin. [Laughter]

People say, "How long are they going to be there?" They will be there until we complete the mission in Afghanistan and Iraq. The mission is a country that can defend itself, and a free country. That's the mission. I talk to parents all the time. I say, "Listen, I want your child home as quickly as possible." But we must not send mixed signals. We must stay the course until the job is done.

The other day, my opponent said in the heat of political—in the heat of the political arena, said, "Well, they'll—if I'm elected, they'll be substantially—the troops will be substantially reduced in 6 months." That's a bad signal to send. You know, you've got an enemy out there listening to every word that's being said in America, so they say, "All we've got to do is sit around, and we'll wait for 6 months and one day." So when you say we'll substantially reduce our troops by 6 months, it not only affects the thinking of the enemy, it also affects the thinking of allies.

Think about those Iraqis. Think about the Iraqi citizens who are wondering whether or not America will keep its word. You got to remember, this country is a country which has gone from tyranny to freedom, and that's a hard transition to make in a quick period of time. And they're wondering whether or not we're really willing to stand with them as they make the hard choices necessary to get to a free society.

Let me talk about a free society. The other day I was campaigning in Phoenix, and I saw a sign—a woman held up a sign that said, "My son is in Iraq." And it was a proud sign to hold up. And I looked at her in the midst of this rally, and I said, "I just want you to know, tell your son, your son is a part of an historic moment because the world is changing." And the world is changing because liberty is beginning to spread its wings in parts of the world that is desperate for freedom.

The short-term strategy is to find this enemy and defeat them so we don't have to face them here at home. The long-term strategy is to spread freedom, because free societies don't export terror. Free societies are hopeful societies. Free societies are societies that are less likely to breed the resentment and anger necessary for killers to recruit youngsters. That's what we're talking about, really, when you think about it. And

it has worked throughout our history. Liberty has worked, and that's what is important for our fellow citizens to remember.

A couple of images I want to share with you, and then I'll answer some questions. One, the image of the Iraqi soccer team playing in this Olympics. It's fantastic, isn't it? What a fantastic thought. Remember—I don't know if you read the *Sports Illustrated* article about—I think it was Uday, one of Saddam's thug sons who would torture Olympians because they weren't able to succeed. Here's a country now, battling for a country that is now free. It wouldn't have been free if the United States had not acted.

Secondly, I want to tell you the story, which I share a lot with people, about having dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi. Laura and I like him a lot. He is the Prime Minister of Japan. He's a good guy. And you know, we're eating Kobe beef there in Tokyo and—[laughter]—pretty fancy. You get good food when you're the President. [Laughter] And I was really impressed during the moment to think that, you know, my dad had fought against Japan in World War II. Many of your dads had fought against the Japanese in World War II. They were our enemy. And here I am talking to the leader of a former enemy, and we were talking about peace. See, we were talking about North Korea, how best we can work together to keep the peace. Isn't that a fantastic thought, that former enemies are now working together for the sake of peace, for our own security, and for world peace.

It would not have happened had my predecessors not believed in the ability of liberty to transform societies. You might remember, after World War II, there were a lot of people who doubted whether or not the Japanese could self-govern, could possibly shirk their militaristic ways, that they could possibly be a friend of the United States. But fortunately, predecessors of mine and Gordon's and the Congressman believed in the power of lib-

erty to transform the attitudes and ways of people. And because we stuck to that belief, that firm belief that is ingrained in this Nation's soul, Japan is now an ally. Someday, an elected leader of Iraq, whether it be Prime Minister or President, will be sitting down with an American President talking about how to keep the peace.

These are historic times. We're living in historic times. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we not only serve the security of our Nation and spread peace, but by securing the ideal of liberty, we listen to the deepest beliefs in our soul, and that is, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Let me—I can keep telling stories, or I'll answer questions. Want another story? All right, one more story, and I'll answer questions.

I'm sitting in the Oval Office; the door opens up. First of all, the Oval Office is a powerful place. It is an unbelievably beautiful room. It is a shrine to democracy. And it's—it quiets the most active tongues, except for Mother. [Laughter] Anyway, so the door opens up, and in walks seven Iraqi men. They had come to see me. A fellow called and said, "This is an interesting story. I think you ought to meet them." They came in. All of them had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because his currency had devalued, and he was looking for scapegoats.

I asked one fellow, I said, "Why you?" Well, he was a jeweler, and he needed gold, and he sold dinars to buy dollars or euros. In other words, he was in the currency exchange during which the dinar had devalued. And he got plucked out of the population, sent into the prison, had his hand cut off, a X branded in his forehead as well. I think they told me, if I'm not mistaken, the Government also charged him for his time in prison.

This is a brutal thing. These seven guys have had their lives, obviously, scarred by Saddam Hussein and his thugs. There's a

documentary made of them. And a guy in Houston, a newsman named Marvin Zindler, who had set aside a foundation to help people who were hurting, whether they be in America or elsewhere, saw the story, flew these guys over to Houston, Texas, where they were outfitted with new hands, and now they've come to see me.

And you know, what a stark contrast that is, isn't it? It's just so vivid and such a powerful imagery to think about the difference between a brutal tyrant who can pluck somebody out of obscurity and maim them for life and a country that is so compassionate and decent that an individual citizen calls them over and fits them with a new hand. And when the guy took the Sharpie and wrote "God bless America" in Arabic, it was a powerful moment to remind me about what a wonderful land we have. That's why I love America so much.

Let me answer some questions. Let me answer some questions, and then I've got to head north. [Laughter] I've got a little more work to do in Washington.

Yes, sir. Go ahead, yell her out.

Support for the President

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Thank you very much. You can leave it at that if you like.

Q. I'm wondering if I can get some inauguration tickets. [Laughter]

The President. Yes, that's good. [Laughter] I like an optimist.

Tax Cuts/Homeownership

Q. I started my business last October, and it was a dream. But it's been going—[inaudible]—everybody I talk to, all my customers, they say the same thing. If it wasn't for your tax cuts and your stimulus and your steady hand since 9/11, my job would never happen—[inaudible]—because of your stimulus package.

The President. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. Let me say something about homeownership. Do you realize that the homeownership rate in America is at an

all-time high? Isn't that a fantastic thought? Don't you love the fact that some—more and more people are opening up their door, saying, "Welcome to my home. This is my piece of property."

One thing about this administration is, we understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the country. We will continue to spread an ownership society throughout America.

What you got? Yes, ma'am. We've got to turn on the mike there. No, you don't have to. Somebody else is supposed to. [Laughter]

Texas Air National Guard

Q. Can you hear me now?

The President. Yes, ma'am. I like the cowboy boots, strong look.

Q. I thought you might like that.

The President. Yes. Yes, it's strong.

Q. Actually, 33 years ago I was working with the Texas Air National Guard.

The President. Oh, fantastic.

Q. From October of '71 to May of '72, you and I knew each other. So you were there.

The President. Oh, thank you. Thank you. Good to see you again. [Laughter]

Yes, sir. Thanks for your service, Sergeant.

2004 Campaign Events

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Do what?

Q. Any fundraising dinners before the election?

The President. Fundraising dinners, no—sure, there will be some. But I'd rather do these kinds of events. I want people to know what I stand for, what I believe, where I want to lead the country. There's more to do. I hope you leave here and walk out and say, "What did he say? He said there's more to do to make this country a safer, stronger, and better place."

Yes, sir.

Judicial Nominations

Q. Mr. President, God bless you and your wife, Laura, first of all.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. And I would like to know in your second term what you are going to do to move more commonsense judges into our courts and get rid of these—[applause].

The President. Thank you, sir. Thanks. I have a responsibility to pick people who will represent this country admirably and strongly on the bench. It's one of my most important duties. I picked people who will strictly interpret the law, not use the bench from which to legislate. That's the judicial philosophy of the people I have picked. And I named a lot of good people from all walks of life. I named a fellow named Miguel Estrada to the DC Circuit Court. It's an important bench. It's a fantastic story. He came up from Honduras. He's a self-made guy, struggled with learning a new language. He comes to this great country. He's such a brilliant lawyer that he's nominated by the President, and he's blocked by a handful of United States Senators. That's the problem we have. We've got people playing politics with American justice, and it's not right.

And so to answer your question, I'll continue—they're not going to intimidate me. I'll continue nominating the people—I will continue nominating people that I know will represent my philosophy and make the courts a better place. And the way to answer your question about what else to do, put people like George Nethercutt in the United States Senate.

Yes, ma'am.

President's Military Service

Q. Mr. President, you were a fighter pilot, and you were with the 147th Fighter Wing—

The President. Yes.

Q. —and flew a very dangerous aircraft, the Delta F-102.

The President. Right. And I'm still standing.

Q. And I thank you for serving our country. [Laughter]

The President. Thank you.

Q. Thank you for serving.

The President. I appreciate you saying that.

Yes, sir.

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Kerry seems to have a lot of trouble remembering dates: when and if he was in Cambodia; who was President, Nixon or Johnson, when he was assigned to Vietnam; what bills in Congress he worked for and when; cannot remember if he campaigned in Oregon or California for George McGovern. Your last opponent you exposed with fuzzy math. It's time to expose John Kerry with fuzzy memory.

The President. You got a question?

Education

Q. I, too, want to say God bless you, Mr. Bush. My husband and my twins and I pray for you daily, as do many home-schoolers. Thank you for recognizing home-schoolers.

The President. You bet. Thanks. Yes, I appreciate you saying that. Listen, the best education always starts in the home. That's where it always starts.

I tell people a lot that it's very important that we work to usher in a culture of personal responsibility. Let me tell you what that means. It means that if you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. And if Laura were up here, she would say that part of that responsibility is, start reading to your child early, is give your child the basics of reading. And I appreciate you saying that.

And thank you for your prayers. The fact that a lot of people in this country pray for me and Laura is heartwarming, strengthening, and a great aspect of the American experience.

Anybody up there? Anybody in the end zone have a question?

Presidential Debates

Q. Mr. President?

The President. All right, let her rip. Yes, ma'am. Oh, you want him to do it? You were the question gatherer-upper.

Q. [*Inaudible*].—Presidential debates—

The President. Presidential debates. You bet.

Q. [*Inaudible*].—How about having Dick Cheney do more than one this time.

The President. Okay, well—he's going to be great. I'm looking forward to the debates. It's going to be—a really a good chance to show people what I believe. And it's—that's what it is. It's a chance to stand up with Senator Kerry by my side, and he and I will talk about what we intend to do. And it's a great opportunity for the people to sort through the issues and to get a sense for our respective visions. And I'm looking forward to them. It's—you know, I've done them in the past, and I'll do them this time around. And I can't say they're a lot of fun, but they're necessary, and they're an important part of the process. And I appreciate the debate sponsors for putting them on.

Yes, ma'am.

Military Service/Iraq/Palestinian State

Q. Hi. My brother-in-law served under your father at Desert Storm, Sergeant Scott Aclair. He is serving at Fort Richardson in Alaska right now and is scheduled to go to Iraq and is just hoping that you are going to be his President that he can serve under again when he goes back there. And when he found out that I would be here, he just asked one thing, if I could shake your hand for him.

The President. Yes, you can. You want to shake it right now? All right.

I want you to remind your brother-in-law what I just said about his mission. Again, I repeat, these are historic times. We're going to look back and say, "Thank

goodness we stuck to our beliefs. Thank goodness we had great faith and value in freedom," because a free Iraq right there in the heart of the Middle East is going to speak to the hopes and aspirations of a lot of people. There's a lot of people watching. I'm telling you—a lot of people watching. The Iraqis are watching. They're watching us. A lot of people are watching in the neighborhood.

You know, one of my dreams is that there be a Palestinian state, a peaceful Palestinian state, a state that's willing to live with our friends the Israelis, where violence isn't the norm, where violence is not the policy, where the leaders of the Palestinians listen to the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people so we can have peace in that vital part of the world.

This is what we are talking about. These are historic times that are going to make an enormous difference in the lives of a lot of people, including ourselves.

Yes, sir.

John Kerry's Military Service

Q. Yes, Mr President—

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. On behalf of Vietnam veterans—and I served six tours over there—we do support the President. I only have one concern, and that's on the Purple Heart, and that is, is that there are over 200,000 Vietnam vets that died from Agent Orange and were never—no Purple Heart has ever been awarded to a Vietnam veteran because of Agent Orange because it's never been changed in the regulations. Yet, we've got a candidate for President out here with two self-inflicted scratches, and I take that as an insult.

The President. Well, I appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you for your service. Six tours? Whew. That's a lot of tours.

Let's see, who've we got here? You got a question?

Freedom of Religion

Q. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. President, for visiting Oregon. I've heard through the grapevine that Oregon is one of the most unchurched States in the Union, and I really feel like it shows up in every walk of our society. Could you take a moment to pray for Oregon, for us, right now?

The President. Well, I appreciate that. I'd—look, I think this. I think the thing about our country that you must understand is that one of the most valuable aspects of America is that people can choose church or not church, and they're equally American. That is a vital part of our society.

It's really important. It's very important that we jealously guard that tradition of America. See, it's the ability to say, "I believe or don't believe," which, in itself, is a valuable freedom that we must never surrender. That's what causes us to stand in stark contrast to nations all around the world. And if you choose to believe, you're equally American if you're Christian, Jew, Muslim, or Hindi. That's the great thing about our country. It's this great freedom. It's the fact that we're free to worship the way we see fit, in itself, is a vibrant part of the soul of America. Remember, that's what—when I was talking about the Taliban, they would drag people out in the public squares for whippings because they did not ascribe to their dim view of religion. And that's the opposite of what we believe in in America.

And so I appreciate what you say, but people in this country need to honor everybody's decision they make about religion. As you know, I've made my choice, and I—I'm—as I told you, I appreciate the prayers of the people. And it's—the prayers are a sustaining aspect of my life. But so long as I'm the President, and I suspect every President after me, hopefully, will jealously guard the great freedom of religion which is a part of our country's heritage.

You're next. No, you're not next. [*Laughter*] I mean, you're not up. You're next. [*Laughter*]

Q. Excuse me.

The President. Sorry.

September 11, 2001

Q. Mr. President, I want to—

The President. —Jack in the Box. Go ahead.

Q. —I want to thank you for everything you did after September 11th. I was in Israel then, and it was hard getting back. And it was very devastating. And you—no one could have done what you did any better.

The President. Thank you so much.

Q. And I want to thank you for your policies and your support and partnership with Israel.

The President. Thank you. Thank you. So, on September the 11th, I'm worried about my family. After we got airborne and moving around, I called Laura. She was safe. And at some point during the day, I tried to find my mother and father. I didn't know where they were, and I wanted to let them know I was safe. And I finally got them on the phone. I said, "Where are you?" They said, well—I think they said, "Milwaukee, Wisconsin." I said, "Oh, yeah? What are you doing there?" She said, "You grounded my plane." [*Laughter*]

Yes, little fellow. What do you got? What grade are you in? Excuse me.

Education

Q. Sixth.

The President. That-a-boy.

Q. Our superintendent makes over 200,000 a year, and he fired my librarian. Why is that? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, let me answer this by telling you—hold on for a minute. Hold on for a minute. I believe in local control of schools. [*Laughter*] The great thing is, you can find your superintendent because he lives in the neighborhood. You couldn't find him if you were in Washington.

[*Laughter*] And I can't answer your question why, but Laura was a librarian, so maybe the superintendent ought to talk to the librarian, Laura. But no, I don't know. [*Laughter*]

Let's see here. Yes, you got one.

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. Okay, you're last—you'll be next.

Audience member. What about me, George? [*Laughter*]

Advice for Entrepreneurs

Q. I'm another young entrepreneur. I work with Vail there and—

The President. You work with this guy?

Q. I work with that guy right there.

The President. Fabulous partner, I bet.

Q. He's a good guy to work with. Also, I'm a new homeowner, I thought I'd add, one of those guys you talked about. Anyways, I was wondering if you had specific advice for us to make sure we succeed.

The President. That's an interesting question. Let's see, make sure your sales are bigger than your expenses. [*Laughter*] Don't borrow more money than you can afford to pay back. [*Laughter*] Listen to your customers. Work your customer accounts really hard. Make products or come up with products that people actually want. Dream big, and work hard.

You're last. You're next, I promise you. After all that exercise, you ought to be able to ask a question. [*Laughter*]

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, as a child, how can I help you get votes?

The President. Thank you. That is the kind of question I like to hear. [*Laughter*] Thank you. Okay, here are some things you can do. First, you can find—you can put signs up in people's yards who want the signs in their yards. [*Laughter*] Second—

Audience member. Come and work in my county.

The President. Yes, come and work in her county. Secondly, here's another sug-

gestion, like, if you've got a friend who may have a older brother or sister who is 18 years old, say to them, "Register to vote, and then please do me a favor, vote on my behalf for George W. Bush." [*Laughter*]

Okay, this is going to be my last question. I'm sorry. We could stay here all day, but I've got another assignment. I've got to head up to Washington State. I'm on the move. I'm campaigning hard. I'm working as hard as I possibly can.

Last question.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. No, I can't do it. If I did you, then they wouldn't believe me. I said "last question," and if it's the next-to-last question, then somebody will say, "Wait a minute, you said last question and you didn't do it." Go ahead.

Education

Q. And she should come see us because we have the Chuck-E-Cheese restaurant, and we could make her happy.

The President. There you go. Very good. That's called selling. [*Laughter*]

Q. That's right. And tagged on to that, most of our employees are 16 and 18 years old, young, hard-working kids. And the problem is they can't afford to go to college—

The President. Yes.

Q. —because of the funding has been cut back. How can we change that?

The President. No, I appreciate that. It's a great question. Actually, at the Federal level, the funding has not been cut back. Now, maybe at the State level. But Pell grants, for example, are up. Pell grants are grants for people to go to college. We've—since I've been the President, a million more people have gone to college on Pell grants. Student loans are up—student loans are up.

One of the most important initiatives that I have put forth and will continue to push is a community college initiative. And I'll tell you why: Because we live in a world

where the jobs—the nature of the jobs change. And these jobs require a different skill set, and there needs to be a place where people can go back and get a different skill set to fill these jobs. And the best place to do so is community colleges.

And we've got a lot of money in Washington, trade adjustment assistance and displaced workers money. I happen to think it's very well spent money to enable—whether they be younger workers or older workers—to go back and get the skills necessary to fill new jobs. And I think about—I've been traveling our country a lot, and I've been to community colleges all over America. Mesa Community College in the Phoenix area, for example, is a place I went. And a lady stood up, and she said, "I worked as a graphic artist for 12 years and was making X. And I got a little help and went back to my community college and got an associate's degree. And then I went to work," she said, "for a computer company"—and made more in her first year in her new job than she had made in her 12th year in her old job.

In other words, what I'm telling you is, education will enhance somebody's productivity, which enhances their pay.

So to answer your question, for 4-year colleges, help at the Federal level is up. But for 2-year colleges, we've got specific programs aimed at helping, whether they be these youngsters or displaced workers or older workers, to gain skills to fill new jobs in areas such as high tech or health care. There are jobs available in America. The thing we've got to do is to be able to match the worker with the job. And a great place to do so is the community college.

Listen, thanks for being here. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:35 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to former professional basketball player Chris Dudley and his wife, Christine; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks in Seattle, Washington *August 13, 2004*

It's my honor to come to this vital and important United States manufacturing company. Boeing is a great name in American industry. Not only does Boeing make a great product; the Boeing Company has got great workers. It's been my honor to spend some time with the people who work here, talking about our world, talking about the need for our country to be confident when it comes to world trade.

I assured the folks with whom I was talking that my administration is dedicated to free and fair trade. See, I believe if our

country is treated fairly, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

The Boeing Company competes against Airbus, which is a European company. Airbus was founded about 30 years ago and has received, in those 30 years, large Government subsidies from European nations and continues to receive them. And I think those subsidies are unfair. I think it makes it—it's unfair to this American company that these European Governments continue to subsidize Airbus. And so I informed these good folks who work here that I've